

# SUCCEED AT EVERY STAGE OF THE BUSINESS LIFECYCLE

Three phases you'll need to navigate — and how to thrive during each one

Planning is critical at every stage of your business — **but your needs, goals and priorities will change significantly over time.**

## PHASE 1:



### FUELING GROWTH

The first phase of the life cycle is also the most exciting: Transforming your idea into a growing business.

**Example:** Small Business Association (SBA) loan.

At this stage, most entrepreneurs need **financing** to reach their goals.

**You can boost your chances of a successful financing application by:**

- Focusing on cash flow
- Creating a financial plan
- Developing financial forecasts



## PHASE 2:



### NAVIGATING MATURITY

After the excitement of explosive growth, the next stage focuses on addressing bottlenecks impacting the business.

- Bottleneck
- Potential solutions to consider

Hitting the ceiling on market share

- Broaden offerings to attract new customers
- Expand to new markets
- Expand into eCommerce

Maxing out operational capacity

- Invest in new equipment/a larger space
- Hire additional talent
- Invest in automation to increase efficiency

Lowered demand due to changing consumer preferences

- Invest in market research to better understand customers' pain points
- Innovate new offerings to meet market needs
- Rethink packaging and processing

Gaps in internal expertise

- Invest in business coaching or consulting to identify and address bottlenecks
- Bring in leadership with the required skills/expertise

## PHASE 3:



### PLANNING YOUR EXIT

Every entrepreneur needs an exit strategy and you've got plenty of options to move into the next phase of your journey.

Shutting down or selling

Passing your business to a family member or colleague



**If you're planning to sell your business or shut it down, take steps now to maximize your valuation:**

- Optimize tax strategy
- Diversify and reduce risk



**If you're passing it to someone else:**

- Consider seller notes, which allow the new owner to pay for the business over time.

Now's also the time to revisit your **personal financial plan** to map out your next steps.



## We're here to support each stage of your journey

Northwest Bank's team of small business experts can provide industry insights and trusted advice, along with a full suite of financial products to bring your vision to life.

**Speak with a member of our team today.**

 **Northwest Bank**

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